

Educated women do more paid work than in the 1970s

April 17 2012



The study found men of all educational backgrounds spend far more time doing housework than they did 30 years ago.

The time diaries of working age men and women in the UK reveal that women in the 2000s who went to college or university spent more time doing paid work and did less housework compared with similarly educated women in the 1970s.

The study also shows that there has been a sharp drop in the amount of paid work being done by men who did not go on to take further qualifications at a college or university. The less qualified male [workforce](#) did 16 hours less paid work a week, on average, compared with men of a similar background 30 years ago.

The research paper will be published online this month by the journal

European Economic Review. The results are based on data from the Multinational Time Use Study, which is central to the activities of the Centre for Time Use Research at Oxford University. The study found that better educated women did 24 hours of paid work a week, on average, in the 2000s – four hours more than women of a similar educational background 30 years ago.

In contrast, less educated women and men of all educational backgrounds did less paid work overall in the 2000s when their time diaries were compared with the sample from the 1970s. In the 1970s men who had not gone to university or college did 47 hours of paid work per week on average, but by the 2000s men who had not gone on to take further qualifications did 31 hours of paid work per week on average.

Men who had gone to college or university also spent less time in paid work in the 2000s than similar men in the 1970s. Thirty years ago men educated to a higher level worked an average of 44 hours a week, but by the 2000s this had gone down to 35 hours a week on average – nine hours less than their counterparts 30 years ago.

Lesser educated women did an hour less paid work a week compared with similarly educated women 30 years ago. Time spent in paid work went down from an average 18 hours to 17 hours per week in the 2000s.

Study author Dr Almudena Sevilla-Sanz, an economist from the Centre for Time Use Research at the University of Oxford, said: 'When you add up the total of hours spent in [paid work](#), doing [housework](#) or looking after the children, men and women who went to college or university have less free time than people of a similar educational background in the 1970s.

"The gap in leisure time between the highly educated and the less educated has also widened over the last 30 years. Although we don't go

as far as establishing a causal link in this paper, it is interesting that the widened gap in leisure time coincided with a pay gap that developed after the second half of the 1980s between those with higher qualifications and the less qualified."

More highly educated women spent five hours less per week doing housework than similarly educated women in the 1970s, says the study. Time spent doing household chores went down from 29 hours per week to 24 hours a week on average. Meanwhile, the amount of time spent doing housework did not change for less educated women, who continued to spend 31 hours per week on average in the 2000s.

Meanwhile, men of all educational backgrounds spent far more time doing housework in the 2000s compared with men in the 1970s. More highly educated men did 16 hours of housework a week, on average – 12 hours more than their counterparts in the 1970s. Lesser educated men spent 17 hours per week on average doing the household chores.

Dr. Sevilla-Sanz said: "The amount of work that women do in looking after the home has gone down compared with the 1970s. Despite the fact that men are doing more jobs around the house, they still haven't equalled the amount that women do. There is some way to go as women in the 2000s did 29 hours of housework whereas men did around 16 hours of housework per week, on average."

The study also found that parents of all backgrounds spent more time looking after their children in the 2000s compared with parents in the 1970s, and there were universal increases in the amount of time spent watching television. The UK findings are part of a larger study tracking around 20,000 working age men and women from seven industrialised nations. The British trends were also reflected in most of the other countries surveyed.

Dr. Sevilla-Sanz noted: "This study highlights the trade-offs that workers have to make. It is relevant for policy makers and employers, who might want to consider new ways of incentivising their workforce or to look at how the work-life balance compares across different countries."

Provided by Oxford University

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